

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF SPECIMENS FOR POTENTIAL POXVIRUS AND OTHER FEBRILE
VESICULAR RASH ILLNESS

Michigan Department of Community Health

IMPORTANT: Specimens not properly labeled, test requisitions not completed or matching specimen labels will not be tested.

NOTE: Suspected cases of smallpox must be immediately reported to the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). Contact MDCH laboratory director at 517-335-8063 and the MDCH epidemiologist/health officer at 517-335-8024 during normal business hours. After hours call 517-335-9030. Be prepared to provide pertinent patient information and emergency 24/7 contact information of the laboratory, attending, and consulting or ED physicians.

1. Freeze coolants upon receipt of the Unit

2. Complete a "Vaccinia/Variola/Pox Virus Requisition" (DCH-1195) supplied with this kit. Place requisition in plastic bag provided to protect from moisture.

3. Collect the specimens listed below. Information given on this sheet is available at the MDCH web: www.michigan.gov/mdch go to providers and then click lab services. More detailed information is provided at the same website under appendix F "Guidelines for the Investigation of Potential Poxvirus and other Febrile Vesicular Rash Illnesses" (pdf file).

a. **Vesicle aspirate in VTM:** Aspirate vesicular fluid into a 1ml syringe containing 0.05ml of Viral Transport Medium (VTM) provided with this kit. Collect fluid from several vesicles if possible. Transfer fluid into the VTM, **taking care not to create aerosols.**

b. **Vesicle aspirate in Saline:** Aspirate 0.3 ml saline from the pink plastic vial into a 1 ml syringe. Aspirate fluid from 2 to 5 vesicles. Transfer the fluid into a sterile screw capped specimen tube, **taking care not to create an aerosol.** Remove an additional 0.3 ml saline to rinse the syringe and transfer the fluid into the same sterile screw capped specimen tube.

c. **Vesicle Roof and Scabs:** Remove the roof from at least four vesicles or pustules; also pry off the same number of scabs using a sterile scalpel or sterile 26-gauge needle. Place two roofs/ two scabs into each of two sterile screw-capped vials respectively. **Do not add liquid to this vial.**

d. **Lesion Swabs:** Rupture lesions containing fluid with a sterile scalpel blade. Using a sterile Dacron swab, scrub the base of the lesion vigorously enough to ensure that cells from the lesion are collected. **Avoid getting blood into the specimen.** Place the swab into a VTM and agitate the swab vigorously. Express excess fluid from the swab on the interior walls of the tube and discard properly. Caution must be used to **avoid creation of aerosols.** If more than one lesion is present, **collect up to five additional swabs** and place each of the swabs into an empty sterile screw-capped vial provided with this kit.

e. **Biopsy Specimens:** Remove the roof (top) of two intact vesicles or pustules. Using a 3.5mm or 4mm punch biopsy kit, collect biopsies from two separate vesicles. Place one biopsy into formalin; place the other biopsy into a sterile screw-capped vial. **Do not add liquid to this vial.**

f. **Serum & Blood:** Draw 10cc of blood into a plastic marble-topped serum separator tube-do not spin or separate serum. Draw 5cc of blood into a plastic purple-topped EDTA tube - gently shake the tube to mix.

g. **Throat Swab:** Swab or brush the posterior tonsillar tissue with a sterile Dacron swab. Place the swab into a sterile screw-capped vial provided with this kit and break off the end of the applicator and discard properly. **Use caution so that aerosols are not created. Do not add liquid to this vial.**

h. **Autopsy specimens:** Refer to the "Guidelines for the Investigation of Poxvirus and other Febrile Vesicular Rash Illnesses" Section III G.

4. Tighten caps securely on all vials or tubes and apply parafilm to seal the caps.

5. Label all specimens with the same name/unique identifier used on the test requisition. Indicate the source of the specimen. (e.g. vesicle aspirate, roof, scab, throat etc.)

6. Refrigerate all specimens - DO NOT FREEZE - until ready to ship.

7. When ready to ship, place properly labeled specimen vials, wrapped in absorbent material provided, into the aluminum screw-capped can included with this kit and secure cap. Seal lid with tape. Place aluminum can into the UN 6.2 shipping unit canister; seal the lid and place into the outer packaging.

8. Apply shipping labels appropriately to the UN 6.2 shipping container and to the Styrofoam lined overpack box. Add the previously frozen ice substitute refrigerants to the overpack and seal.

9. Ship package in the manner directed by MDCH - see **NOTE** above.

NOTE: The shipper is responsible for being sure that their package is in compliance with the current shipping regulations.